

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 235184

FOR HARRIMAN PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:OGEN, UR, US

SUBJECT: ARTICLE ON ENVOY TO YUGOSLAVIA

REF: MOSCOW 14953

ENVOY TO YUGOSLAVIA CAUSES CONTROVERSY AT STATE DEPART-  
MENT, -

WASHINGTON, SEPT 18 - ,STATEMENTS BY LAURENCE H. SILBERMAN,  
UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO YUGOSLAVIA, ON BEHALF OF AN  
AMERICAN CITIZEN IMPRISONED IN THAT COUNTRY HAVE HAD SHARP  
REPERCUSSIONS INSIDE THE STATE DEPARTMENT, ACCORDING TO  
ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS.

THEY SAID MR. SILBERMAN HAD DEMANDED THE REMOVAL OF THE  
DEPARTMENT'S YUGOSLAV DESK OFFICER, ALAN R. THOMPSON, OVER  
THE HANDLING OF THE SPY CASE. MR. THOMPSON WAS TRANS-  
FERRED LAST MONTH.

THE INTERNAL CONTROVERSY CENTERED ON MR. SILBERMAN'S  
PUBLIC CONDEMNATION OF THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT FOR HOLDING  
LASZLO TOTH, A COLORADO ENGINEER WITH DUAL YUGOSLAV AND  
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AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP, AS A SPY FOR MORE THAN 11 MONTHS.

SUPPORTED BY WHITE HOUSE .

THE ENVOY MADE HIS CRITICISMS IN YUGOSLAVIA ON JUNE 7,  
THE DAY YUGOSLAVIA INFORMED THE UNITED STATES IT WOULD  
SOON RELEASE MR. TOTH, AND AGAIN ON JULY 23, THE DAY  
MR. TOTH WAS RELEASED.

MR. SILBERMAN WAS PRAISED IN AMERICAN NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS  
FOR HIS DEFENSE OF MR. TOTH AND HIS ACTIONS WERE LATER  
SUPPORTED BY THE WHITE HOUSE AND SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY  
A. KISSINGER.

BUT INSIDE THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, OFFICIALS THERE SAID,  
A MOVE WAS MADE AT A VERY HIGH LEVEL TO HAVE HIM RESIGN  
OR BE REPRIMANDED FOR "UNDIPLOMATIC BEHAVIOR".

MR. SILBERMAN HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE WAS CRITICIZED BY  
THE "EASTERN EUROPEAN SECTION" OF THE DEPARTMENT.

BUT OTHER OFFICIALS SAID THAT A REPRIMAND HAD BEEN UNDER  
CONSIDERATION BY DEPUTY SECRETARY CHARLES W. ROBINSON,  
DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR MANAGEMENT LAWRENCE S. EAGLE-  
BURGER AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
ARTHUR A. HARTMAN.

IT WAS FINALLY OVERRULED BY MR. KISSINGER, WHO WAS SAID  
TO HAVE FELT THAT A REPRIMAND WOULD ONLY PROVOKE MR.  
SILBERMAN TO CARRY HIS CASE TO THE PUBLIC AGAIN AND  
POSSIBLY BECOME AN ISSUE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.

MR. KISSINGER WAS ALSO DESCRIBED AS FEELING THAT IT  
WOULD SERVE NO PURPOSE TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST MR. SILBER-  
MAN BECAUSE PRESIDENT TITO ASSAILED MR. SILBERMAN IN AN  
INTERVIEW WITH TANJUG, THE OFFICIAL NEWS AGENCY, ON JULY  
31.

PRESIDENT TITO ACCUSED AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN OF WAGING A  
"CAMPAIGN PRESSURE" AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA. RELATIONS  
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN BURDENED BY THE  
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MUTUAL ACCUSATIONS, AMERICAN AND YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS SAID.

AS A RESULT MR. KISSINGER ORDERED ALL DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS  
DIRECTLY CONCERNED WITH THE MATTER NOT TO DISCUSS IT WITH  
THE PRESS. HE ALSO SENT AN ADVISORY MESSAGE TO MR.  
SILBERMAN ASKING HIM NOT TO PROVOKE NEW ALTERCATIONS WITH  
HIS HOST GOVERNMENT, THE OFFICIALS SAID.

THE CONTROVERSY HAS ALSO HAD A PHILOSOPHICAL ELEMENT,  
THE OFFICIALS ADDED, BECAUSE IT INVOLVED ADMINISTRATION  
ATTITUDES TOWARD THE COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT IN YUGOSLAVIA.

MR. SILBERMAN, A CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN, HAS MADE A  
POINT OF DECLARING HIS DISTASTE FOR COMMUNIST POLICIES  
AND WHAT HE DEEMED ANTI-AMERICAN ACTIONS BY YUGOSLAVIA,  
THEY SAID.

IN THIS REGARD, THEY SAID, HE HAS EARNED A CERTAIN AMOUNT  
OF SYMPATHY FROM MR. KISSINGER AND SOME OF HIS AIDES WHO  
HAVE VIEWED SOME YUGOSLAV POLICIES--FOR INSTANCE IN THE  
ANGOLA CRISIS LAST YEAR--AS "UNHELPFUL". " HABIB

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